Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada

OUR P.N.E.U. NATURAL HISTORY CLUB.

By the Lady Isabel Margesson.

The Club was started last May by the Belgravia Branch of the P.N.E.U., whose members found themselves confronted by a task of no small difficulty. They fully realised that children will not become keen and enthusiastic about Natural History, unless their parents and teachers also show feelings of interest and devotion to it. But as very few, comparatively speaking, of the present generation have been taught to study Natural Science in their youth, it is now a difficulty how to set about learning, and how to show enthusiasm over what is unknown and unfamiliar.

Meanwhile the educational advantages to be gained by the study of Natural History are being repeatedly urged, and many parents do not intend to allow their children to grow up without some knowledge and love of the common objects of the country

The Natural History Club has come to the rescue. It proposes to help parents and teachers in their study of Natural History, and to show them how there may be opportunities of "doing and learning" in even their busy lives. The Club is an acknowledgment of the fact that no one can "inspire" and teach well, unless they have an enthusiasm and love of their subject. They may, of course, be fellow-workers with the children, and only a little ahead of them, but if they are to succeed they must themselves do and learn for their own sake as well as for the sake of teaching.

If parents and teachers are not willing to do this, it would be better for them not to try to teach Natural History, as they might create a distaste for it that might be a barrier to gaining knowledge in the future.

The Club proposes to render efficient help in the following ways :—

1st. By lectures to be given at the Natural History Museum.

2nd. By holding an exhibition in November of collections to be made by members and children.

3rd. By arranging a plan of systematic study and instruction.

Miss Hodgson has kindly undertaken this last part of the work. Many members will be familiar with the "Natural

History Notes," written by her in the *Parents' Review*. She is a devoted "Naturalist," and her help and advice will be of great value. Miss Hodgson will set papers for each quarter's work, and will suggest subjects for the weekly lessons, and a question asked on each. Miss Hodgson will give the name of the text-book which is to be used. She will also suggest the lines on which out-door observations should be made at different seasons, with special reference to the keeping of Nature note-books.

Miss Hodgson will arrange a junior and a senior Course of work. She will form a plan of study that can be used as well for teaching children at home as for children in schools, whether National or otherwise.

The Committee believe that members who follow the Course will derive from it nearly as much benefit and pleasure as their pupils. The Committee also hope that these Courses may make it possible for many who wish to help village children to the love and knowledge of natural history, to take up the work of giving them systematic and delightful lessons.

The first, but we hope by no means the last, exhibition of collections made by members and children, was held last November, and proved to be most successful.* Forty-eight collections were sent, most of them by members who had had no previous experience in the study of Natural History and field-work. There were also many specimens of work done by little children under their parents' guidance.

Mr. Ernest Sykes was kind enough to come and inspect the exhibition and to draw up a report on it. This report, together with the rules of the club, can be obtained from the Hon. Sec., 63, St. George's Road, S.W., price $4\frac{1}{2}d$.

Miss Hodgson's Natural History quarterly papers mentioned above can now be sent to members. The fee for joining the Course for one quarter is 1*s*. 6*d*.

Four Lectures on Animals will be given at the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, on Saturdays in February.

Four Lectures will be given at the Geological Museum, Jermyn Street, in March.

The Lectures are open to non-members. Fee for each Course 4*s*. Tickets can be obtained from the Hon. Sec.

* The exhibition took place at the High School, Graham Street, Eaton Square, by kind permission of Miss Holmes, who gave us much valuable help and encouragement.